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TUESDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 2016

Arson Investigation Underway on Three Bakken Pipeline Sites

from *Newton Daily News*

(<http://www.newtondailynews.com/2016/08/01/arson-investigation-underway-on-three-bakken-pipeline-sites/a7lc0hy/>)



(<http://earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/pa46y3wucrk6u1xjmmgetrq04hc1aw.jpg>) Equipment fires at three construction sites in Jasper and Mahaska counties, Iowa, on the Dakota Access Pipeline construction route over the weekend are being treated as acts of arson by local law enforcement.

The Newton Fire Department and Jasper County Sheriff's deputies responded to the fire at approximately 6 a.m. Monday in a farm field on South 12th Avenue West, about 4.5 miles west of Newton. A local resident called 911 to report the blaze.

According to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty, two machines were damaged at the Newton site — one was smoldering and the other was still ablaze when firefighters and deputies arrived on scene. The damaged pieces of equipment were identified as a bulldozer and a track hoe.

Deputies in Jasper County are also investigating a second fire on Salmon Street about 2.5 miles southeast of Reasnor.

The Newton Daily News confirmed a third report of suspected arson in Mahaska County over the weekend involving equipment on the DAPL route about 8.5 miles north of Oskaloosa.

"We believe it's an obvious, intentionally set fire. It wasn't like the equipment overheated," Halferty said at the scene near Newton.

As of Monday morning, investigators did not have any suspects in the case. Halferty said the fires could have been set by a single person, but law enforcement is not ruling out the possibility of multiple suspects. Construction began on the crude oil pipeline in Jasper County last week. Halferty said the fires are the first local reports of vandalism related to the project.

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According to investigators, the combined estimated damage to the Newton and Reasnor construction sites is approximately \$1 million. Damage was located in the bulldozer and track hoes' engine and cab compartments. Halferty said the machinery is likely a total loss.

The equipment is owned by Huston-based subcontractor Pe Ben U.S.A. and Precision Pipeline of Eau Claire, Wis. is running the Jasper County job sites.

A representative from Precision Pipeline declined to comment Monday, but work site superintendents told the Jasper County Sheriff's Department the fires would set construction back about one day. Precision has experienced minor cases of vandalism on other project sites but has never had equipment set on fire in Iowa.

Halferty said the state fire marshal and Iowa DCI have also been notified of the incidents. The Jasper County Sheriff's Office and the Newton Fire Marshal are leading the investigations near Newton and Reasnor.

Law enforcement is working the case on minimal evidence, Halferty said, and the sheriff's office is asking for the public's assistance in the case.

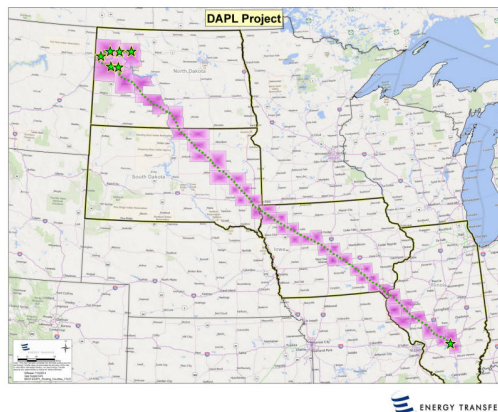
"We want to rely on the public. If they notice anything call it in," he said. "We'd encourage them to call in something that may or may not be suspicious. If we don't know about it, it's hard to follow up on."

Scott Miller, a deputy at the Mahaska County Sheriff's Office, said Monday four pieces of heavy equipment were found burned on the pipeline route at 175th Street and Kent Avenue between Oskaloosa and New Sharon. Investigators believe the fire was set early Sunday morning.

The New Sharon Fire Department were the first to respond to the scene. Miller said the fire happened early Sunday morning and investigators for the Mahaska County Sheriff's Office also had no suspects as of Monday.

The \$3.8 million, 1,164-mile DAPL project is under construction in four U.S. states. When completed it will transport a maximum 540,000 barrels of crude oil per day from the Bakken Oil Fields in North Dakota to a hub in Patoka, Ill.

Approximately 343 miles of pipe will be laid underground in 18 counties Iowa counties. Dakota Access, LLC — a subsidiary of Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners — expects to be complete with construction and have the pipeline in operation by the end of 2016.



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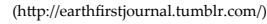


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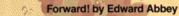


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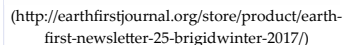
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